

Coffee Break

By Adeline Daley

Something is going to have to be done about the "Population Explosion" in the "Barbie" doll family before I go broke.

As a matter of fact, when I first purchased Barbie, I thought she was like any other doll—a friendless orphan whom my children would "adopt" as their very own. What I first discovered, of course, was that Barbie was different from other dolls my children had played with, in that she had to have a bigger wardrobe than Audrey Hepburn.

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First to appear on the scene was "Midge," who it developed was Barbie's best friend. Since every girl should have a confidante, I purchased Midge, who turned out to be equally clothes-conscious and together they proved to be on the go continually—skiing, skating, ballet dancing, playing tennis—all requiring wardrobe changes.

They even had to try at a career as night club singers which gave me a start one day because one of my kids shouted, "Barbie's topless." It turned out that her head had fallen off.

You wouldn't expect these girls to be wall-flowers, would you? Presto—Ken and Allen. What a foursome! Together they made the Jet Set look like stay-at-homes. Their latest project was putting on an amateur play production. Not just a Tennessee Williams-type drama either where a torn "T" shirt would do, but Lerner - Loewe extravaganzas.

Oh, and I forgot to tell you—Barbie has a younger sister, "Skipper," an effervescent teenager with a clothes closet rivaling her sister's. And "Skipper" not only has ONE boy friend, "Scooter," but another, "Ricky" who just sort of hangs around. My suspicions are that "Ricky's" folks are loaded, because he wears yachting, polo, skin-diving, outfits and drives an expensive sports car.

Then there are the young twins, "Tutti and Tod," sister and brother of Barbie, who appeared from out of nowhere and require changes. Other than dinners, I'll have you know.

"I guess this just about does it," I hopefully remarked to my kids, because the line-up of dolls was getting to resemble the front row of the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes.

Enter "Francie," Barbie's "mod" cousin. But here I have put my foot down. I've tried to warn my kids that Francie spells trouble. Don't think she won't try to be the "other woman" and try to win either Ken or Allen away from Barbie and Midge.

I suppose I ought to count my blessings that though Barbie lives in a modern, split-level, fully furnished home (\$12.95) apparently she has no parents. At least for now. But what fun would they be—working, commuting, shopping at the market and wearing last year's clothes? Somebody has to pay the bills.

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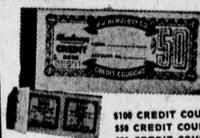
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